ture are imitative arts, for which a faithful rendering of the works of nature suffice: *architecture* deals more with her principles than her individual forms, and needs, therefore, to be shown how to deduce these principles, and further to learn how to apply them to her conventional purposes.

Thus in designing ornament, the province of the architect is to seize such salient points as may suggest the characteristic form of the natural type, without carrying the imitation so far as to destroy the idea of the material on which it is represented, or destroying its breadth of light and shade, necessary as the portion of a great whole, rather than an object perfect in itself.

Towards the right comprehension of these principles, the next step in advance, much that is practically useful has been contributed by Mr. Ruskin, on their application to art in general, in his treatise on the imaginative and theoretic faculties, as well as on their application to architecure in the "Seven Lamps," the brilliancy of which, however, vanishes sadly into gloom when he approaches the point under consideration, in the "Lamp of Obedience," where he forbids us all hope of progress till we can again merge the profession into a band of Freemasons, and "teach our architecture at our schools, from Cornwall to Northumberland, as we would teach English spelling or English grammar,"—where he proclaims that "until a universal system of form and workmanship be everywhere adopted and enforced, our architecture will languish in the dust,"—"that the only chance for architecture rests on the bare possibility of obtaining the consent of architects and the public, to choose a style and use it universally;" which opinion is also supported by Mr. Fergusson, who tells us that a gradual national improvement of some style universally chosen and practised, will alone effect progress in *art*, by the same means as facts are accumulated in physical science, from which he traces the arts in regular gradation, and would thence conclude that the same causes influence the whole series, and would therefore discourage the idea of individual improvement, and prohibit any from practising otherwise than on the general design, which alone they might add to, improve, or correct when in error.

These views are plausible in theory, but, as regards practice, utterly impossible. The scheme is opposed to the spirit of the time; for the days of feudalism and monastic compulsion are past. Architects are no longer an order of priests. The very numbers in the profession preclude a hope that they could, even if they would, submit to such a thraldom. Nor would the public remain satisfied with the monotony that must ensue. Mr. Ruskin himself fears its impossibility, but asserts that with that he has nothing to do. Yet indeed we have something to do with its possibility, for the present is one phase in the general development of society—one page of the history of its progress, to which the world has not arrived by chance. To deny to it the possibility of progress, is to assert that Providence is at fault, which is an anomaly: we may be sure that we can never be placed in a position where our duty should be impossible.

Nor, as has been before explained, need the parallel between physical science and architecture necessarily hold good. Under certain peculiar circumstances it has done so at some former period, which has given Mr. Fergusson the pretext for his argument. But in each case these circumstances were different from those of modern times, and impossible to be revived. As in the states of Greece, whose principal architectural structures were temples, each like the preceding, with such refinements only as experience might suggest, with no other variation for centuries; or in the mediæval ages, under an ecclesiastical monopoly, to which all learning and literature, as well as architecture, was confined, by whose members alone any sacred structure could be built. Then there is at least an equal precedent, not taken into this account, on the opposite side, under circumstances far more similar to our own; for neither Brunelleschi, Alberti, San Gallo, Palladio, Vignola, nor the other illustrious architects of Italy, were members of a band of Freemasons, but studied as we do now, and worked as we might do now, individually producing works of undeniably high merit, stamped with their own individuality, and yet conforming to the manners and feelings of the age; and, further, have we bright examples among our own countrymen, Wren, Vanbrugh, Inigo Jones, Sir Wm. Chambers, &c., to whom, as members of no clique, nor yet having learnt their architecture as their spelling, hope of progress might as reasonably have been denied as to us.

But other methods have been suggested besides these for the renovation of our art. We have been told that the mediæval architects worked out their glorious styles from the precepts of Vitruvius, and thought their result the same which he had intended, and we have been advised to follow the same course. It must, however, be acknowledged, that if they did think so, they made a great mistake, though a fortunate one perhaps. It is equally certain that we should make as great a mistake. But the chances of its being so fortunate are ten thousand to one.

Others imagine they have discovered the traces of a system of geometry, by which they produced their works. Now it is probable they did so, and it is certain that geometrical science is most useful to architecture; yet I fear, that if we wait till we can have fitted together its scanty relics, it will be for us at least so late, that when we have found the route we intend to pursue, we shall then be tempted to say with Sir Joshua Reynolds—"were I now to begin again, I would pursue such a course."

All these suggestions seem to take it for granted, that the formation of a universal style on the model of those of past ages, is the grand consideration. It may be, that one or other of these methods is the only one by which such could be produced. But then it is not necessary that such a style should be established in order that architecture may progress. We look not that our painters should give precisely the same features, the same attitudes to their figures, the same composition or tone of colour to their pictures. The day has passed when the works of a nation should be reckoned in the aggregate, and their growth described as regularly as that of a vegetable.

We want neither a new nor a universal style: we should know nothing about styles; the very name is a bane and a hindrance to architects, however useful to the antiquary. Let us leave it to posterity to classify our productions, and be sure that if we work simply, neither copying nor striving for singularity, we cannot so completely emancipate ourselves from the feelings of our own age and country but that they will give an impress to our work, though we may not discern it for ourselves. We shall at least work that which shall have the appearance of life; and rudely, it may be, yet surely, pierce to the sympathies of men. Let us, then, shun plagiarism as a stain on the reputation of the architect, as it would be in literature; and then all beauty is common. Columnar architecture, and delicacy of moulding, and precision of symmetry are not the inalienable property of the Greek, though his several and peculiar orders are. Lofty proportion, vigorous light and shade, fairy tracery, fretted vaulting, are not a Gothic patent, though each of their cathedrals, with all its crisp foliage, and quaint imagery or curious penetrations, and various details, left to us throughout the length and breadth of the land as a record of the labour and zeal and love of their builders, is a *sign manual*, which it is *forgery* for us to repeat. The well whence they drew is open to us, and we may do more and better than they, since they have shown us how, and we have not all that lesson to learn for ourselves.

The remedies, therefore, that have been proposed are too violent for our case. Yet though we cannot compel such a unity of practice throughout the profession, we may and must expect, if we are to look for progress, a far greater degree of consistency in that of its individual members than there is at present, for one thought fully carried out is sufficient for a man's life, nay, is a legacy he may be proud to bequeath. If, then, in pandering to the appetite for novelty, no two designs of an architect are to resemble each other, there is no help for him but to continue copying the works of others, without resting to perfect one idea of his own: the lamp of obedience is a noble one, and necessary to rescue us from restless agitation for novelty, which is as injurious as the opposite extreme. All progress must be founded on what has been done before. Whatever precedent then a man selects, let him keep to that, improving thereon to his utmost, nor be driven from his post by the withering storms of criticism, which are too certain to arise whenever anything that has not previous authority is attempted.

It is then upon our own individual improvement and consistency we must depend for progress. There is little practical use in seeking for new theories for the development of architecture, for the present system is sufficient for our purpose; it is reform, not revolution, we require,—a higher aim and a recognition of the dignity of our art,—a closer study of the forms of nature, by drawing the human figure and natural objects, as an important branch of our education (one, however, seldom considered), by which the taste would become refined, and such a feeling for beauty given as would not desert us throughout the sterner studies of the science,—a due comprehension of the principles of architecture derived from nature, of which proportion and symmetry form the foundation,—and, further, in practice and in criticism, the exercise of common sense; for much evil has arisen from treating architecture as if amenable to some other peculiar laws. How often do we hear persons refuse to judge of a building by the same tests they would apply to other things, on the grounds that if it do not please them, it may yet be in *the style*, as if *style* were an excuse for ugliness, a species of juggling known only to the initiated! As in literature, it is not well to mince and pick and choose our words, and cavil about the rounding of a sentence, lest to such minor points we sacrifice the point and pith of the argument, and as we should rather seek to write with terseness and energy what we have to say, and look to the matter and not to the manner,—so in architecture, let us not worry ourselves to be original, nor strive to be peculiar. "Genius," says Emerson, "leaves to novices the gay, the fantastic, and ostentatious, and itself pierces directly to the simple and true." "Nothing astonishes man so much as common sense and plain dealing."—JOHN P. SADDON.

THE BUILDING, &c., FOR THE EXHIBITION OF ALL NATIONS.

THE committee having come to know that many contributors of suggestions for the building are preparing complete sets of working drawings, wish us to call particular attention to that part of their former statement in which they ask for *suggestions only* as to the general management of the ground-plan, and request contributors not at present to enter into details of construction or architectural decorations.

After the general arrangement of the building has been determined by the aid of the plans and suggestions now called for, it is the intention of the commissioners to invite, by a *second public notice*, designs, accompanied by tenders, from architects, builders, and manufacturers, for the construction of the buildings, of the form and according to the general arrangement which shall have been thus fixed upon by the commissioners.

At a meeting held at Huddersfield last week, to give the operative classes an opportunity of expressing their sentiments on the projected exhibition, a mechanic, who stated that he had invented a valuable machine, but could not protect it by patent for lack of the necessary funds, started the question, whether the exhibition of an unpatented invention at the Industrial Exhibition of 1851 would be deemed a publication. He said that many who were in his position would be glad to exhibit, if they were protected from the consequences ordinarily following a publication; and he suggested that some special provision should be made in this case: his views met with the general approbation of the persons assembled.——A public meeting will be held in Kensington on the 20th inst. A strong committee has been organized there, and will doubtless render good service to the cause.——In London city, they expect to raise about 30,000*l*. The corporation gave 500*l*. A ladies' committee has been appointed there to promote the object.

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